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THE HOUND OF THE FALCONER. ROMAN AND BYZANTINE HAWKING IN THE VENETIAN CYNEGETICA

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Abstract

An illustrated Byzantine manuscript of the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian, housed in the Biblioteca Marciana of Venice, has deserved the attention of scholarship because it contains a vast collection of zoological, mythological and hunting images that could be traced back to an original Roman model. However, a careful examination of some of its miniatures reveals details that may be better understood in a Byzantine context. This is the case of a falconry scene on fol. 2v of the manuscript. A general overview of falconry and hunting from Antiquity to the late Byzantine Empire will let us focus on every single element of hawking of the aforementioned scene. The falconer, the hound and the partridges depicted by the Byzantine miniaturist of our codex unveil that this image is not just an illustration of the text, nor a copy of an ancient model, but the representation of a widely practiced activity in the Byzantine world.

Keywords: Hunting, falconry, hound, Medieval art, Byzantine, Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, manuscript

Resumen

Un manuscrito ilustrado de la *Cynegetica* de Pseudo-Opiano, albergado en la Biblioteca Marciana de Venecia, ha merecido la atención de la historiografía por contener una importante colección de imágenes de zoología, mitología y caza que podrían remontarse a un modelo original romano. Sin embargo, un estudio pormenorizado de algunas de sus miniaturas revela detalles que pueden entenderse mejor en un contexto bizantino. Este es el caso de una escena de cetrería en el fol. 2v del manuscrito. Un análisis general de la cetrería y la caza desde la Antigüedad al tardo Imperio bizantino nos permitirá estudiar al detalle cada uno de los elementos de dicha escena. El cetrero, el perro y las perdices representadas por el miniaturista bizantino de nuestro códice desvelan que esta imagen no es sólo una ilustración del texto, ni la copia de un modelo antiguo, sino la representación de una actividad ampliamente practicada en el mundo bizantino.

Metadata*:* Caza, cetrería, perro de caza, arte medieval, bizantino, Pseudo-Opiano, Cynegetica, manuscrito

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A Byzantine manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana of Venice is unique in its kind for different reasons. Firstly, it is a Byzantine copy of a much older Roman text. Secondly, it is richly decorated with high quality miniatures that evoke stylistically and thematically Roman and Byzantine traditions. And thirdly, it is the only extant illustrated manuscript dedicated to the subject of hunting from the Byzantine period. I am referring to the Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881), a book that contains an ancient text copied and illustrated centuries later. Such a work offers countless enigmas to present day scholars, but it also gives clues to understand both Classical and Byzantine cultures. Furthermore, some of its miniatures do not match the ancient text and may be explained by the Byzantine context in which they were created. This is precisely what we will pursue in our study, focusing on an image of hawking in the company of a very particular hound (figs. 1, 2).

1. The manuscript

The Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881) contains a treatise on hunting written in Greek as a didactic poem in hexameter by an unknown author, who dedicated it to emperor Caracalla (212-217). The title of the book is *Cynegetica*, a term that refers to the activity of hunting with hounds, widely used for hunting treatises in Ancient Greece from Xenophon to Arrian and Nemesian.[1] The only information we have about the author is provided directly by himself when he states in Book II that he was from Apamea in Syria (verses 156-157).[2] The first miniature of the manuscript contains a scene of the poet handing the codex to emperor Caracalla, an event that may have taken place during the

[1] The most prominent hunting treatise with this title is Xenophon's *Cynegetica*, written in the 4th century BCE. Later homonymous Greek hunting treatises were written during the times of the Roman Empire, such as Arrian's *Cynegetica* in the 2nd century CE and Nemesian's *Cynegetica* in the 3rd century CE. An edition of these treatises can be found in D. B. Hull, *Hounds and Hunting in Ancient Greece*, Chicago 1964; and also, in A. A. Philips & M. M. Willcock (eds.), *Xenophon and Arrian on Hunting with Hounds*, Warminster 1999.

[2] For a multilingual edition and translation in Spanish, English and Italian of Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica* see *Tratado de caza. Oppiano. Cynegetica*, Valencia 2002.

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stay of the emperor in Antioch in 215-216, where he remained for a whole winter with his Syrian mother Julia Domna.[3] As it happens with many ancient and medieval works, our treatise was erroneously attributed to a previous writer called Oppian of Cilicia, who wrote a treatise on fishing –the *Halieutica*– dedicated to emperor Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus while they were ruling together (177-180). Due to this confusion, the poet of our *Cynegetica* is generally referred as Oppian of Apamea, to be distinguished from the Cilician Oppian, or simply as Pseudo-Oppian.[4] Since the Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881) is today in Venice, it is sometimes mentioned as the Venetian Oppian.[5] Nevertheless, I will refer to the 3rd century hunting treatise as the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian, which may be more accurate because the name of the original author is still ignored. The manuscript of the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice will be cited as the Venetian *Cynegetica*, a more precise term than the Venetian Oppian.[6]

It is not easy to track the history of the Venetian *Cynegetica*, since we do not know the exact date of its creation nor the identity of its first owner. The manuscript was written in a script called by modern scholars *Perlschrift*, a type of writing developed from the end of the 10th century until the mid of the 11th century. Due to the similarity of the writing with other Byzantine manuscripts, it has been proposed that the Venetian *Cynegetica* could have been created within the first decade of the 11th century.[7] The style of its miniatures has also been dated in this period, since they resemble the illustrations of two other manuscripts written for Basil II (976-1025).[8] Therefore, it seems safe to state that the codex was

[3] I. Spatharakis, *The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice. Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 139*, Leiden 2004, 1-7.

[4] P. Eleuteri, "The Tradition of the *Cynegetica* and paleographical Comments about the Marciana Codex", in *Tratado de caza* (cit. n. 2), 231; Spatharakis, *The Illustrations* (cit. n. 3), 2-3.

[5] The Venetian manuscript is the oldest preserved exemplar of Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica*. Based on this manuscript, two further illustrated copies were made in the 16th century. Both are housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and are classified as Ms BnF Gr. 2736 and Ms BnF Gr. 2737. The first was probably copied for king Francis I and his library of Fontainebleau; whereas Gr. 2737 was copied after Gr. 2736 by Angelo Vergezio and illustrated by his daughter in 1554, see S. Marcon, "Codex Gr. Z 479 (=881) of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana: Physical Makeup and Former Owner", in *Tratado de caza*, 242. For the different manuscripts of Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica* see also A. W. Byvanck, "De geïllustreerde Handschriften van Oppianus' *Cynegetica*", *Mededeelingen van het Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te Rome 5 (1925)*, 34-64; T. Silva Sánchez, *Sobre el texto de los* Cynegetica *de Opiano de Apamea*, Cádiz 2002, 29-58.

[6] Even if it can generate some confusion with Greek works with the same title (see note 1), I find it more accurate than the term Venetian Oppian used by previous scholars.

[7] Eleuteri, "The Tradition" (cit. n. 4), 234-235; M. Formentin, "L'Oppiano del Marc. Gr. 479. Note paleografiche e filologiche", in *Miscellanea 3 (Studi in onore di Elpidio Mioni)*, Padua 1982, 19-29.

[8] K. Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art*, Princeton 1984, 93-94.

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written and illustrated at the beginning of the 11th century, probably in an imperial workshop in Constantinople. It is possible that it was commissioned for emperor Basil II in the first decade of the 11th century or for his brother, the future emperor Constantine VIII, who held an extreme passion for hunting.[9] Nevertheless, hunting has always been popular amongst the highest layers of society, so any Byzantine aristocrat living in the first quarter of the 11th century could have been the original owner of the manuscript.[10]

The first documented news we have about our manuscript is that it was the property of cardinal Bessarion, a Greek bibliophile who lived in Italy after he was designated cardinal of the Latin church in 1439. Bessarion possessed a vast number of Greek and Latin manuscripts that he donated to the Republic of Venice in 1468. His collection included the Venetian *Cynegetica*, compiled in the first inventory of St. Mark's library, the predecessor of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. It is possible that the Venetian *Cynegetica* was previously owned by the Italian humanist Giovanni Aurispa, who could have acquired it in Greece, while he was secretary to emperor John Palaelogus in 1421-1424. An inventory made after Aurispa's death in 1459 includes two manuscripts attributed to Oppian: one of them was likely the *Halieutica* by the Cilician Oppian and the second may have been our *Cynegetica*, at the time wrongly attributed to Oppian. It is highly likely that Bessarion obtained the Venetian *Cynegetica* after Aurispa's death, but unfortunately this cannot be proven because the original cover was replaced in the 18th century and there is no information left regarding former owners.[11]

2. The hunting illustrations

Previous scholarship classified the miniatures of the Venetian *Cynegetica* in two groups: the so-called scientific group, which includes all the images specifically related to the subject of hunting of the text; and the mythological group that englobes twenty-five miniatures depicting mythological scenes that have nothing to do with the text of the treatise and seem to have been inserted to embellish the manuscript after the iconoclast controversy. Kurt Weitzmann was responsible for this classification and stated that the scientific

[9] Michael Psellus, 2, 8. I have used J. Signes Codoñer (ed.), *Miguel Pselo. Vidas de los emperadores de Bizancio*, Madrid 2005, 108.

[10] It has been argued that this treatise could have been written for an emperor with enormous passion for hunting like Isaac Commenus (1057-1059), see I. Furlan, "The Illustrations in the *Cynegetica*", in *Tratado de caza*, 251, 262. Nevertheless, there were several Byzantine emperors with great passion for hunting between the 11th and the 12th centuries. For a general overview of Byzantine imperial hunting, see E. Patlagean, "De la chasse et du souverain", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992), 257-263.

[11] S. Marcon, "Codex Gr. Z 479 (=881)" (cit. n. 5), 237-243.

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group possibly followed an ancient original model with the intention to make the text more understandable. According to his thesis, that would explain why the miniatures are frameless following a papyrus style.[12]

As it has been pointed out by later scholars, this classification does not do justice to the nature, origin and style of the majority of images of the manuscript related to the subject of hunting. Centuries of possible intermediate copies cannot be summarized in the concept that these images merely illustrated the text of an original Roman model. Approaching from the perspective of a historian concerned with the history of hunting, Kurt Lindner asserted that it is not possible to englobe all the hunting illustrations of the Venetian *Cynegetica* in a coherent group that derived directly from a lost Roman original. Some of these miniatures illustrate hunting practices that were popular in the ancient world and have iconographic parallels in Roman mosaics; whereas other miniatures differ from the text of the *Cynegetica* and show scenes that may be better understood as later or even Byzantine creations.[13]

It is extremely difficult to discern the quantity of miniatures that may follow an original Roman model from those that may be later additions or original creations in the Venetian *Cynegetica*. Even if we acknowledged an ancient origin in many of the illustrations, their depiction on an early 11th century manuscript would be the result of the transference from a 3rd century original through intermediate copies for a period of eight centuries. The evolution and transformation of original models for such a long time could have been sufficient to create new images. It is undeniable that there is an iconographical relationship between ancient models and the animals of the Venetian *Cynegetica*, but a careful look at each of its miniatures will reveal some details that betray the idea that the images are simple copies of a Roman original.[14] We will later see how one of the hunting miniatures of our manuscript was reinterpreted in a 16th century copy. This may well have also happened several times in the past; therefore, the Venetian *Cynegetica* could be somehow considered a genuine creation of its time.

Some scholars have compared the hunting images of the Venetian *Cynegetica* with Roman mosaics to reconstruct a hypothetical lost Roman illustrated copy of the text.

[12] Weitzmann focused his research on the mythological images and believed to have solved the problem of the rest of the miniatures by classifying them as scientific images, see Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology* (cit. n. 8), 94-151, esp. 94-96; Id., "The Classical Heritage in the Art of Constantinople", in H. L. Kessler (ed.), *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, Chicago 1971, 129-130; Id., *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration*, Princeton 1947, 74.

[13] K. Lindner, *Beiträge zu Vogelfang und Falknerei im Altertum*, Berlin 1973, 79-90.

[14] Z. Kadar, *Survivals of Greek Zoological Illuminations in Byzantine Manuscripts*, Budapest 1978, 113-129.

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Because many Roman hunting mosaics were executed between the 4th and 6th century, it has even been proposed that the first illustrated version of the *Cynegetica* could be traced back to this period. However, all efforts to recreate an alleged Roman original may be in vain, since there is no proof that such a copy ever existed.[15] Nevertheless, some miniatures of the Venetian *Cynegetica* are set in the wrong place and there are times that the same character is represented with different features, which could indicate that the illuminator was not always familiar with the text and may have been following a former copy of the treatise.[16]

Besides a hypothetical former copy of the *Cynegetica*, the 11th century illustrator of our manuscript would have had access to a wide range of animal and hunting iconography that could have likewise influenced his compositions. Illustrated versions of other hunting treatises, bestiaries or books about animals would have been at hand in the libraries of Constantinople. Moreover, hunting would have been a frequent subject on Byzantine mosaics, frescoes or ivory works of the period. Keeping in mind these considerations, we cannot rule out the possibility that the images of the Venetian *Cynegetica* may be, to a greater extent that has been so far considered, the result of an original creation.[17]

We will proceed to analyze the images of fowling in the Venetian *Cynegetica* to explore to what degree they could be a continuation of Roman traditions or the representation of contemporary practices. Some illustrations could emulate genuine Byzantine iconography or even derive from careful observation of fowling in the 11th century, a possibility not fully considered by previous scholarship.

3. Fowling in the Venetian Cynegetica

The miniatures of fol. 2v in the Venetian *Cynegetica* (fig. 1) show different ways of fowling to illustrate a text that refers to this practice:

> Yea and to the fowler his toil is sweet; for to their hunt the fowlers carry nor sword nor bill nor brazen spear, but the hawk is their attendant when they travel to the woods, and the long cords and the clammy yellow birdlime and the reeds that tread an airy path.[18]

The images above and under the text depict four different ways of fowling. In the upper part a group of children are catching birds with limed reeds, a common practice

[15] Mara Bonfioli compares these miniatures with late antique mosaics in an attempt to reconstruct the miniatures of the original manuscript, see M. Bonfioli, "Le rappresentazioni di caccia del Codice Marciano Greco 479 – Oppiano", *Felix Ravenna* 20 (1956), 31-49.

[16] Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 6-7, 206-212.

[17] Furlan, "The Illustrations" (cit. n. 10), 256-259.

[18] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 62-66, in *Tratado de caza*, 288.

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in Roman hunting. One of them seems to be preparing a limed reed, other two are already catching birds in a tree and a third one holds a bird in his hands, either a prey or a decoy. This image is a clear illustration of the "clammy yellow birdlime and the reeds" mentioned in the accompanying text. The depiction of bird hunting with limed reeds was frequent in Roman art, a good deal of this sort of hunting scenes show Cupid as the performer of the hunt or a group of winged children.[19] Therefore, we could conclude that this fowling scene with limed reeds belongs to an ancient tradition and it is likely that a similar image may have illustrated an older manuscript of the *Cynegetica*. There is one more depiction of the use of limed reeds to catch birds on fol. 13r of our manuscript that includes both children and adults participating in this type of hunting. Lindner states that this type of hunting was typical of lower layers of society and slaves, but the inclusion of children may be related to the Roman iconographic model of winged Cupids catching birds.[20] However, Sparathakis notes that the *Ixeutica* of Dyonisios (3, 13) and Saint Basil (PG, 30, 24b) mention children hunting birds with limed reeds, so these images could be the result of a Byzantine tradition.[21]

The lower scene on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* shows another type of fowling that includes a limed cord and two caged birds as decoy. A well-dressed fowler in front of a tent is using a limed cord to catch birds attracted to the area by two caged birds in front of him. This image is also related to "the long cords and the clammy yellow birdlime" mentioned in the text, but it has parallels in at least three other mid-11th century Byzantine manuscripts, so it seems to belong to an established iconographic tradition.[22] The tent of the fowler is decorated with two further hunting scenes that also follow Byzantine models: a cheetah is chasing a stag and a hawk is flying over a hare.[23] An 11th century *Tetraevangelion* of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Ms BnF Gr. 64) contains two similar scenes above the Canon Tables (fols. 5v and 6r). A falconer with a dead hare is about to release a hawk that presumably falls onto a covey of partridges and grabs one of them in the following

[19] Lindner, *Beiträge* (cit. n. 13), 15-77, 81.

[20] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 81, 88; Furlan, "The Illustrations", 78. Spatharakis compares these images with a passage of the *Ixeutica* of Dyonisius that explains that winter fowlers hid limed reeds in the trees and used caged birds as decoy as we can see on these images, see Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 25-26.

[21] Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 28.

[22] A very similar image can be found in three manuscripts of Gregory of Nazanzius' *Homilies*: Ms BnF Gr. 533, fol. 34v in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Codex Panteleimon 6, fol. 37v in Mount Athos and Taphou 14, fol. 33v in Jerusalem Patriarchal Library, see Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 27.

[23] *Tetraevangelion* of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Ms BnF Gr. 64, fols. 5v, 6r). See Lindner, *Beiträge*, 85-87.

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scene (fig. 3). The next folio of the manuscript contains the chase of a stag and a doe by a recently freed cheetah. This codex is contemporary to the Venetian *Cynegetica*, so it could be presumed that certain iconographic types circulated amongst Byzantine *scriptoria*.[24]

Right in front of the fowler with a limed cord a different type of hunting has been included. A kneeling man is carefully hidden among the foliage, he seems to have a net and uses a probably caged partridge as decoy to attract other partridges and make them fall inside the net (fig. 1). We are aware that ancient Romans kept live partridges as decoys and other devices to conduct groups of partridges inside nets, so this scene could belong to such a tradition.[25]

4. A falconer hunting partridges

So far, we have not analyzed the image of the falconer on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica*, which is the most enigmatic and interesting of all the fowling illustrations in the manuscript (fig. 2). On the upper right corner of this folio we can see a falconer with curly hair and dressed in rich garments with a hawk on the fist of his left arm. He is accompanied by a spotted hound that seems to remain still in front of a bush or tree, where a group of three partridges is hiding. It is by all means a typical medieval scene of hawking with a hound, but we need to wonder to what extent this image could be explained by an ancient tradition of hunting or, on the contrary, it represents an innovative way of hawking.

There is no documentary or visual evidence of the practice of falconry in Ancient Greece.[26] Hawking was neither popular amongst Romans;[27] however, there are at least

[24] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 85-87; Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 236.

[25] J. M. Blázquez, "Mosaicos romanos con aves rapaces (halcones en escenas de cacería y águilas en escenas simbólicas) y con la caza de la perdiz", *Anas* 7-8 (1994-1995), 107-116; R. Warland, "Vom Heros zum Jagdherrn. Transformationen des Leitbildes Jagd in der Kunst der Spätantike", in W. Martini (ed.), *Die Jagd der Eliten in den Erinnerungskulturen von der Antike bis in die Frühe Neuzeit*, Göttingen 2000, 177-178.

[26] Aristotle mentions some sort of fowling with hawks in Thracia that has sometimes been misinterpreted as hawking, see Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, 9, 36, in D. M. Balme (ed.), Aristotle, *Book of Animals, Books 7-10*, Cambridge (MA) 1991, 309. Nonetheless, modern historians agree that this practice could not be understood as hawking, since the prey birds involved in the action are not hawks kept in captivity, but hawks that spontaneously participate in the hunt. It is generally agreed that hawking was not practiced in Ancient Greece, see H. J. Epstein, "The Origin and Earliest History of Falconry", *Isis* 34 (1943), 497-509, here 501-505; Lindner, *Beiträge*, 112-116; O. Longo, "Caccia coi falchi a Tracia?", *Atti e Memorie dell'Academia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 99 (1988), 39-45; Id., *Le forme della predazione. Cacciatori e pescatori nella Grecia antica*, Naples 1989, 70-71.

[27] J. Aymard, *Les chasses romaines des origines á la fin du siècle des Antonins*, Paris 1951.

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two vague allusions to the practice of hawking in the first centuries of the Roman Empire. The first reference is an epigram by Martial, who by the end of the 1st century AD states that "[the hawk] preyed once upon birds; the servant of the fowler now, he strikes them down, and is sad the birds are not taken for his own behoof".[28] Martial refers to a domesticated hawk that catches birds for a fowler instead of for itself: this could confirm that hawking was already spread in the Roman Empire during the Flavian dynasty or at least in Hispania, Martial's homeland.[29] The next mention to hawking in Roman times is precisely in our manuscript: the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian. The text that this image is illustrating literally states that "the hawk is their attendant [of fowlers] when they travel to the woods".[30] It is certainly extremely brief and it gives no information about the types of hawks involved in hunting, nor the need of hounds, nor the birds that were to be caught. Moreover, this text has been considered a reminiscent of a frequently copied text, originally written by Aristotle, that has nothing to do with hawking. Therefore, Pseudo-Oppian's verses may not be interpreted as a proper reference to hawking either.[31] Nevertheless, the accompanying illustrations of this text contain a clear picture of hawking that needs more attention to understand the nature of the miniatures in our manuscript.

Hawking seems to have become popular in Europe with the Germanic invasions in the late centuries of the Roman Empire. Documentary sources in 5th century Gaul report that hawks, hounds and horses were valued for the purpose of the hunt.[32] By this time, hawking with hounds was probably widely spread, since contemporary Roman mosaics show accurate hunting scenes with hawks and hounds. A 5th century mosaic

[28] Martial, *Epigrams*, 14, 216, in W. C. A. Ker (ed. and trans.), *Epigrams*, New York 1927, vol. 2, 514.

[29] Epstein, "The Origin" (cit. n. 26), 504. Iberians could have been practicing hawking since at least the III century BCE, they depicted congruent scenes of hawking both on clay ceramics and on minted coins, see M. C. Marín Ceballos, "Cetrería en el mundo ibérico", in P. Sáez and S. Ordóñez (eds.), *Homenaje al profesor Presedo*, Sevilla 1994, 267-281. I am currently preparing a paper on Iberian hawking.

[30] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica* 1, 64, in *Tratado de caza*, 288.

[31] See note 26 and Epstein, "The Origin", 505.

[32] Authors generally quote the biography of Paulinus of Pella and the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris, see Epstein, "The Origin", 505; Lindner, *Beiträge*, 118; M. Guardia Pons, *Las pinturas bajas de la ermita de San Baudelio de Berlanga (Soria)*, Soria 1982, 37-39; D. Boccassini, *Il volo della mente. Falconeria e Sofia nel mondo mediterraneo: Islam, Federico II, Dante*, Ravenna 2003, 41-45. For the reference to hawking in Paulinus of Pella I have used C. Moussy (ed.), Paulin de Pella, *Poème d'action de grâces et prière*, París 1974, 68-69. For the letter of Sidonius Apollinaris I have used P. Mohr (ed.), C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius, Leipzig 1895, 3, 3, 2 and 4, 9, 2, 55, 82 (in English, see W.B. Anderson [ed. and trans.], Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letters*, Books 3-9, Cambridge [MA] 1965).

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from Carthage, now housed in the Bardo Museum in Tunisia, contains a scene of hare hunting with horses, hounds and hawks (fig. 4).[33] A man riding a horse has released a hawk that has already caught a hare, while two other hounds chase two more hares that will presumably fall into nets. The use of hounds and nets to catch hares was probably the most typical way of hunting in Ancient Greece and Rome, but the illustration of a prey bird falling on a hare reflects a new way to practice this sport in Late Antiquity. As we will later see, hounds and hawks were used together in hare hunting because hounds could help hawks to kill the prey. It is possible that the rendering of hawks and hounds in the same scene had the purpose to represent this collaboration. It is interesting that the Venetian *Cynegetica* contains a very similar scene on fol. 54v (fig. 5), so it could be conjectured that it was ultimately based on a late Roman model. On the miniature of our manuscript two different ways of hunting have been represented in separate scenes. The upper part shows a clumsy depiction of a hunter forcing hares to fall into nets; whereas the lower miniature contains a hound chasing two hares and a prey bird falling upon one of them. No falconer has been included in this image, but its omission could be understood by the fact that hounds do not hunt by themselves and necessarily have to be released by a hunter, so the illustrator could have chosen to focus on the performance of the hawk and the hound.[34]

The pavement of the 6th century "Villa of the Falconer" in Argos (Greece) depicts a whole hunting cycle that shows hounds and hawks working separately. The iconographic cycle consists of five different scenes. The first scene is badly damaged, but two legs of a presumed falconer and a prey bird can still be seen. The second contains the start of the hunt that includes a falconer with a hawk on his left fist and a leashed dog in his right hand, another hunter is putting on his footwear in front of another dog (fig. 6). The fact that the falconer holds the hawk on his fist is something new, since previous Roman mosaics showed fowlers carrying hawks on their backs.[35] Perhaps this corresponds to a new Byzantine custom that can also be noticed on the falconer of the Venetian *Cynegetica*. Both hunters have a beard and long hair, so they are recognizable in the following scenes. The third scene shows how a 6th century falconer in Byzantine Greece would proceed in the hunt: he has released his prey bird after seeing a group of ducks, so that the hawk can catch one of them. Instead of using a hound to help the

[33] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 126-134; K. M. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford 1978, 59.

[34] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 126-134.

[35] The most well-known example is the mosaic of "the small hunt" from Piazza Armerina. It must be noted that the scene represents a typical Roman *aucupium* (fowling) that was different to hawking, see *ibid*., 30-33.

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hawk kill the prey, the hunter holds a knife for this purpose. The fourth scene depicts the other hunter observing his hounds chasing and catching hares. Finally, a fifth scene represents the return from the hunt.[36]

The hawk and the hounds of the Villa of the Falconer did not cooperate in the hunt, we can conclude that the hawk was useful to catch birds such as ducks and the hounds were valued for their speed to chase and catch hares. This does not mean that prey birds were not employed to catch hares, as we have seen on the Tunisian mosaic and on fol. 54v of our Venetian *Cynegetica*, but it is possible that by the 5th and 6th centuries hawks and hounds had not been trained to work together yet. On the contrary, the hawking scene of our manuscript clearly depicts a collaboration between the falconer, the hawk and the hound to catch partridges. This is something unique that deserves more attention to be able to explain a type of hunting that by no means is just an illustration of the text.

5. The hound of the falconer

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the image of hawking on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* is the hound used to hunt partridges (fig. 2). We need to wonder what type of hound it was and if it corresponds to an ancient or a medieval way of hunting. Greco-Roman sources mention different types of hunting dogs, but their names are usually related to their lands of origin and sometimes they may be more literary than real.[37] This is also certainly the case of the breeds mentioned in Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica*, they are classified by the countries or regions in which they were bred; thus, the poet admits the existence of the following breeds: Paeonian, Ausanian, Carian, Thracian, Iberian, Arcadian, Argive, Laconian, Tegean, Sarmatan, Celtic, Cretan, Magnesian, Amorgian, Egyptian, Locrian, Molossian, Arcadian, Elean, Tuscan and Agassian. It is extremely hard to reach conclusions regarding the differences amongst these breeds. Furthermore, the poet acknowledges that mix breeding was also possible, but he recommends that breeds should remain pure.[38] Moreover, there were different types of dogs in every region, so sometimes their homeland does not provide much information about them. It will be more useful to focus on the types of hounds and their skills in the hunt to reach some clear conclusion about the dogs depicted on the Venetian *Cynegetica*.

[36] For the mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer see G. Akerström-Hougen, *The Calendar and Hunting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer in Argos. A study in Early Byzantine Iconography*, Stockholm 1974, 28-32, 86-101; Lindner, *Beiträge*, 136-148; Boccassini, *Il volo* (cit. n. 32), 48-49.

[37] Aymard, *Les chasses* (cit. n. 27), 246-274; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, Baltimore 1996 (1973), 102-106; Hull, *Hounds* (cit. n. 1), 20-38.

[38] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 367-398, 468-471, in *Tratado de caza*, 296.

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Ancient treatises on hunting generally describe hounds that chased hares by sight and speed that could be identified as gazehounds –swift dogs that had the skills to follow and even catch the preys. However, it is not always easy to fully understand the qualities and features of hunting hounds in Antiquity. In the 4th century BCE Xenophon describes in his *Cynegetica* a hound with a light head and small and thin ears used to hunt hares that probably corresponds to some sort of gazehound.[39] An homonymous work written by Arrian in the 2nd century CE praises hounds mainly for their speed to hunt hares.[40] In our *Cynegetica*, Pseudo-Oppian offers a portrait of gazehounds with a long and strong body, a light head and small ears probably similar to those of Xenophon and Arrian.[41] Greek pottery and funerary steles generally show a strong dog with erect ears and a long muzzle that resembles the type of hound usually depicted on Roman mosaics to hunt hares. An accurate classification of hounds in Antiquity is difficult and slippery, but the hounds involved in hare hunting and most commonly depicted on Roman mosaics could be defined as gazehounds.[42] The hounds of the 5th century mosaic from Carthage, the one on fol. 54v of our Venetian *Cynegetica* and the hounds on the pavement of the Villa of the Falconer are gazehounds –probably the most common hunting hounds in Antiquity, since they were the best auxiliaries in hare hunting, the most frequently depicted in Greek art and literature.

[39] Xenophon, *Cynegetica*, 4, in Hull, *Hounds* (cit. n. 1), 42-45.

[40] The name of these dogs is related to their skills to run and to their lands of origin, see Arrian, *Cynegetica*, 3, in Hull, *Hounds*, 94-95.

[41] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 402-412, in *Tratado de caza*, 295.

[42] For hounds in the Ancient world see Hull, *Hounds*; J. K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World*, Berkeley 1985; J. M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece*, Baltimore 2001. There is a good collection of hunting images on Greek ceramics in A. Schnapp, *Le chasseur et la cité. Chasse et érotique dans la Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1997, 177-452. Gazehounds is a term that could be applied to greyhounds and to a sturdier type of dog with erect ears common all over the Mediterranean in Antiquity. This second type of dog was used to hunt hares and rabbits, in English it is called Pharaoh hound, a term given to these hounds imported from Malta because they were believed to come originally from Egypt, and Warren hound. In native Maltese, this dog is called *kelb tal-fenek* (rabbit dog), term that alludes to the fact that it was used in rabbit hunting. There are many variants of this type of dog in the Iberian Peninsula under the term *podenco* or *podengo*. In Italy, there is a smaller version of this hound called *cirnecco*. For this type of dog in ancient Egypt and the Middle East see R. H. Merlen, De canibus. *Dog and Hound in Antiquity*, London 1971; D. Brewer, T. Clark and A. Philips, *Dogs in Antiquity. Anubis to Cerberus. The origins of the domestic dog*, Warminster 2001; M. Rice, *Swifter than the Arrow. The Golden Hunting Hounds of Ancient Egypt*, London & New York 2006; F. Hole and C. Wyllie, "The Oldest Depictions of Canines and a Possible Early Breed of Dog in Iran", *Palèorient* 33 (2007), 175-185. In Roman sources, gazehounds are sometimes mentioned as *vertragus* that came from the Gaul or the *sloughi* from North Africa, see Aymard, *Les chasses*, 239-240; J. Bugnion, *Les chasses médiévales. Le brachet, le lévrier, l'épagneul, leur nomenclature, leur métier, leur typologie*, Gollion 2005, 16, 20, 77-79.

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At this point, we should wonder if the hound that assists the falconer on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* is also a gazehound or another type of hound. The miniaturist of our manuscript has not included many specific anatomical details to clearly distinguish different types of dogs, but it is possible to identify them by the context in which they have been inserted. Another type of hound on the illustrations of the Venetian *Cynegetica* is the scent hound –a dog that mainly uses his nose to track the scent of animals and barks loud when it follows the trail or finds the animal. Many of the hounds tracking or chasing bigger mammals such as deer, boars or bears in our manuscript could be understood as scent hounds. Their tracking skills and the value of their scent are described by Pseudo-Oppian, who even praises the nose of a Celtic breed called Agassians with shaggy hair and dull eyes.[43] Celtic scent hounds had been extensively portrayed by Arrian in his *Cynegetica*, but he heavily criticized them for their slowness and the loudness of their cries at hunting.[44] In our opinion, the Celtic scent hounds mentioned in Arrian and Pseudo-Oppian's works, but absent in Xenophon's *Cynegetica*, are the predecessors of medieval western scent hounds, generally depicted in medieval art and sources with a sad look, large drooping ears and falling lips.[45] It could be interpreted that the scent hounds of the Venetian *Cynegetica* have floppy ears, but the painter of the manuscript has represented the ears of all hounds with a similar formula, so it is hard to reach any firm conclusion about them, besides the fact that they are not erect (fig. 7).

One more type of hound on the miniatures of the Venetian *Cynegetica* is the catch dog –a muscled big sized dog with a flat face and strong jaws to bite and catch big mammals so that hunters can kill them with a spear or sword. Pseudo-Oppian states that catch dogs do not tremble before attacking bulls, boars or lions and describes them with strong bodies, broad backs and flat-nosed faces.[46] We can see them in scenes of boar and bear hunting on the miniatures of the Venetian *Cynegetica*, some of them wear big collars for protection due to the dangers of their role in the hunt (fig. 8).

Of these three types of hounds, the hound of the falconer on fol. 2v of our Venetian *Cynegetica* could by no means be a scent hound, nor a catch dog, since these hounds were

[43] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 468-480, in *Tratado de caza*, 296. Hull thinks the Agassian dog could have been a terrier, but he admits that the dullness of eye is not characteristic of terriers, see Hull, *Hounds*, 26. We think that Pseudo-Oppian's description is coherent with the Celtic scent hounds described in Antiquity.

[44] Arrian, *Cynegetica*, 3, in Hull, *Hounds*, 94-95.

[45] C. Espí Forcén, "El sabueso medieval. Fuentes e iconografía desde su origen hasta los tratados cinegéticos del siglo XIV", *Boletín de Arte-UMA* 40 (2019), 123-133; Bugnion, *Les chasses* (cit. n. 42), 27-49.

[46] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 414-429, in *Tratado de caza*, 295.

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useless in bird hunting. A scent hound would make birds flush with their loud barks before hunters could arrive to where they were hidden and a catch dog would be completely unnecessary to hunt partridges. It is nonetheless possible that the hound of the falconer is a gazehound, but we need to pay more attention to the scene to reach a more certain conclusion. So far, we have seen that gazehounds could be practical in hare hunting because they could help hawks to kill the prey. The novelty on the illustration of fol. 2v is that our falconer is not hunting hares, he holds a hawk on his left fist and is accompanied by a hound in front of a covey of partridges (*alectoris graeca* or *chukar*) hidden in some sort of vegetation (fig. 2).[47] The text of the *Cynegetica* vaguely alludes to the hawk as the companion of the falconer, but Pseudo-Oppian provides no information about the use of hounds to hunt birds, nor the type of birds that could be caught by a hawk. Falconry became popular in Europe in Late Antiquity and most of the Greek hunting treatises that have been preserved precede this period, so we lack significant sources to understand hawking in the Early Middle Ages. Unfortunately, no early Byzantine treatise on hunting has survived to the present, although other sources attest that falconry was popular in the Byzantine empire. Michael Psellus reports in his *Chronographia* the love for hunting of some 11th century emperors. The biography of emperor Isaac Commenus (1057-1059) is interesting because he was obsessed with hunting to the extent that it caused him a disease that eventually made him die. According to Psellus, Isaac Commenus hunted in the wild with hounds or hawks, but he does not offer details about how he used them. Nonetheless, Psellus adds that the emperor really enjoyed hunting cranes.[48] These big birds were often killed by hawks with the help of gazehounds, as it is explained in a much later western treatise on falconry: *De arte venandi cum avibus*, written in 13th century Sicily by emperor Frederic II of Hohenstaufen.[49] This Sicilian text has traits of eastern

[47] Lindner states that they are francolins, see Lindner, *Beiträge*, 81, 84; and Forlan thinks that they are quails (p. 378 in original Italian). However, the miniaturist has depicted partridges very accurately, either rock partridges (*alectoris graeca*) from European Greece or the similar chukar partridges (*alectoris chukar*) from Anatolia. Partridges can be seen also on the lower miniature of fol. 2v, on fol. 29r and on fol. 29v. in the Venetian *Cynegetica*.

[48] Michael Psellus, 10, 72-73, Signes Codoñer, *Vidas* (cit. n. 9), 404-405.

[49] Frederic II refers to greyhounds as *leporarii* (harriers) or *veltres*, a medieval term that probably comes from the *vertragi* mentioned by Arrian, *Cynegetica*, 3, in Hull, *Hounds*, 94-95. For *De arte venandi cum avibus,* see C. A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (ed. and trans.), *The Art of Falconry being De arte venandi cum avibus of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen*, Stanford 1943, 267. For other editions see C. A. Willemsen, *Über die Kunst mit Völgen zu jagen. Kommentar zur lateinischen und deutschen Ausgabe*, I-III, Frankfurt a. M. 1964-1970; A. Paulus and B. Van den Abeele (eds.), *Frédéric II de Hohenstaufen. "L'art de chasser avec des oiseaux"*, Nogent-Le-Roi 2001; A. L. Trombetti Budriesi (ed.), *Federico II di Svevia. De arte venandi cum avibus. L'arte di cacciare con gli uccelli*, Rome 2000. Secondary literature on *De arte venandi cum avibus* is vast,

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falconry that Frederic II had learned during his crusade to Holy Land in 1228-1229,[50] so it is possible that Isaac Commenus also used hawks and gazehounds to hunt cranes.

The falconer on fol. 2v is not hunting cranes, but partridges that could inflict no damage on the hawk. The hound that assists the falconer had to be intended to work in a different way, his role was more likely to flush the covey of partridges hidden in front of him. We could guess that hunting partridges with hawks was probably extended in the Byzantine empire thanks to the earliest Arabian treatise on falconry. I am referring to the *Kitāb ḍawārī aṭ-ṭair* (Book on the Birds of Prey), an 8th century text written by the Syrian hunter al-Ġiṭrīf Ibn-Qudāma al-Ġassānī using a former Byzantine treatise on the subject as one of his main sources. Even if it may not be a very reliable source to fully understand Byzantine falconry, al-Ġiṭrīf indicates how different types of hawks were useful to catch francolins, quails, partridges and pheasants. However, the Syrian hunter does not offer any information about hounds.[51]

Our knowledge of Byzantine falconry is scarce, the oldest falconry book that has reached our days is a 15th century treatise on hawks and hounds attributed to a certain Demetrius of Constantinople that has been identified with Demetrius Pepagomenus. Even if it was written a few centuries after the completion of the Venetian *Cynegetica*, it is presumed to follow a former tradition of Byzantine hunting.[52] Like many other medieval treatises on falconry, the text of Pepagomenus is mainly dedicated to the different remedies and medicines to cure hawks and dogs.[53] It is divided in two parts: the cures and medicines of hawks and the cures and medicines of dogs. The second part starts

some recent studies are J. Fried, "Kaiser Friedrich II als Jäger", in W. Rösener (ed.), *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalt*er, Göttingen 1997, 149-166; F. Capaccioni, "Intorno al *De arte venandi cum avibus* di Federico II", in *Studi Medievali*, Spoleto 2006, 877-895; G. Grebner and J. Fried (eds.), *Kulturtransfer und Hofgesellschaft im Mittelalter. Wissenkultur am sizilianischen und kastilischen Hof im 13. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2008; B. Van den Abeele, *Text et image dans les manuscrits de chasse médiévaux*, Paris 2013, 25-48. Gazehounds may have helped hawks in Western Europe since the Early Middle Ages. In 8th century Germanic laws there is reference to a "hawk hound" (*hapuhhunt*), but it is not possible to know what kind of hound it was. Bugnion thinks that the *hapuhhunt* was probably a gazehound, see Bugnion, *Les chasses*, 21.

[50] G. Mandalà, "Il falconiere di Ögödey, i giardini del Minse e le colombe di Federico II. Frammenti di storia aviaria siciliana", in *Memoria, storia e identità*, Palermo 2011, 439-442.

[51] For the edition of this treatise see B. Van den Abeele (ed.), *al-Ġiṭrīf Ibn-Qudāma al-Ġassānī, Traité des oiseaux de vol (Kitāb ḍawārī aṭ-ṭair): le plus ancien traité de fauconnerie arabe*, traduit, introduit et annoté par François Viré et Detlef Möller, Nogent-le-Roi 2002.

[52] A. Diller, "Demetrius Pepagomenus", *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 35-42, here 37; F. Viré and D. Möller in Van den Abeele, *al-Ġiṭrīf* (cit. n. 51), 22, 25, n. 44.

[53] For medieval treatises on falconry see mainly B. Van den Abeele, *La fauconnerie au Moyen Âge. Connaissance, affaitage et médecine des oiseaux d'après les traits latins*, Paris 1994.

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with an introduction that praises the value of dogs for men and hunting, his description of the most suitable hounds for hunting is similar to that of Pseudo-Oppian in the *Cynegetica*. Both authors state that the best dogs are those similar to wolves and leopards, so it is possible to conclude that Pepagomenus' text is based on a much older tradition. Pepagomenus shows a preference for dogs with small, hard and erect ears over those with large drooping ears, so he could be privileging gazehounds over scent hounds.[54]

A key document to understand Byzantine hunting is a description of hare and partridge hunting in 1156 by a certain Constantine Pantechnès, an aristocrat from Philoppopolis (Thracia). The original source can be found in a compilation of 12th century Greek documents gathered in a 13th century codex housed in the library of El Escorial, Madrid.[55] Pantechnès states that falconers carried hawks on their fist like the falconer of the Venetian *Cynegetica*. In his narrative, hawks and hounds were used together to hunt hares; the author accurately describes how hawks fell on their victims and tore their skin with their claws, while hounds run to retrieve the prey and take it to the hunters. Such a scene matches the representation of the Tunisian mosaic of Carthage and the miniature on fol. 54v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* (figs. 4-5). Pantechnès continues with an account of partridge hunting by a big number of falconers riding horses. The behaviour of partridges flying away from bushes several times until some of them were caught by hawks is extremely realistic, to the point that we could even conclude that Pantechnès was witness to these events.[56]

The miniature on the Canon Tables of fol. 5v of the aforementioned 11th century *Tetraevangelion* (fig. 3) shows a scene perfectly consistent with the events described by Pantechnès. A falconer is about to release his hawk while he holds a dead hare with his left hand. The hawk has presumably caught one of the partridges of the covey in the next scene, while other partridges are flying away, and there is still one hiding in the bushes.[57] The 11th century *Pala d'Oro* of Saint Mark's church in Venice contains three medallions with the image of an emperor identified as Michael VII Ducas (1071-1078) riding a horse with a hawk on his fist and a hound on the ground. The inclusion of a hare and a bird on

[54] Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 1, 431-433, in *Tratado de caza*, 295. I have used a Latin 16th century edition of Demetrius Pepagomenus' work, P. Gillio (ed.), *Demetrii Constantinopolitani. De cura et medicina canum*, in *Aeliani de historia animalium libri XVII*, Lyon 1565, 655-668, esp. 659. For the different manuscripts and editions of the treatise, see A. Diller, "Demetrius Pepagomenus" (cit. n. 52), 37-40.

[55] M. E. Miller, "Description d'une chasse à l'once par un écrivain byzantin du XIIe siècle de notre ère", *Annuaire de l'association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France* 6 (1872), 29-32.

[56] *Ibid*., 40-42.

[57] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 86; Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 236.

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two of the three medallions seems to mean that the emperor has been depicted with the main characters of the hunt in both bird and hare hunting.[58]

At this point, we could try to reconstruct the image of falconry on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* (fig. 2). The falconer is accompanied by a hound, whose role on the scene would consist of flushing the partridges so that the falconer releases the hawk to catch one of them. The hound could run afterwards to retrieve the partridge to the hunter, as it was explained in the hare hunting account by Constantine Pantechnès. The miniaturist seems to have included a typical contemporary hawking scene to illustrate a text that merely mentioned the hawk as the companion of the fowler. The possibility that the hound of the falconer is a gazehound, similar to those from Carthage, the Villa of the Falconer and on fol. 54v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* cannot be ruled out. Ancient gazehounds were typically thin with light heads and erect ears and they certainly could flush the game and retrieve it, so the inclusion of a gazehound in such a scene would be coherent. However, at first sight, anyone familiar with bird hunting would immediately see a different type of hound on this scene: a bird dog.

There were two different kinds of bird dogs in medieval Europe: some would just flush birds, while others had the skills to remain still when they smelled the scent of birds to indicate where they were hidden –namely setters and pointers. Lindner thought that the hound of the falconer on fol. 2v was actually pointing the hidden birds (*vorstehen*),[59] but this statement is problematic because the first documentary source that has survived regarding the existence of pointers was written in 13th century Western Europe by Albert the Great in his *De animalibus* (Book XXII).[60] The hound of fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* is a spotted dog that seems to have drooping ears and possibly a docked tail, typical features of western late medieval and early modern bird dogs.[61] The hound of the falconer of this manuscript was also understood to be a bird dog in the 16th century, as we can deduct from the copy of the Venetian *Cynegetica* made for king Francis I of France

[58] Spatharakis, *The Illustrations*, 235.

[59] Lindner, *Beiträge*, 84.

[60] K. F. Kitchell Jr. and I. M. Resnick (ed. and trans.), Albertus Magnus. *On Animals. A Medieval* Summa Zoologica, Baltimore 1999, vol. 2, 1460. See also J. Loncke (ed.), *La* practica canum. *Le* De cane *d'Albert le Grand: l'art de soigner les chiens de chasse au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2007, 103-104.

[61] Caudectomy is useful in bird dogs because they wag their tail while hunting, so when the tail is long, they make noise and flush the birds. Besides, the tail is easily hurt by a dense vegetation. The earliest documentary reference to caudectomy that I am aware of is in a 16th century treatise on hunting with hounds, see M. Biondo, "De canibus et venatione", in G. Innamorati (ed.), *L'arte della caccia, Testi di falconeria, ucellagione e altre caccie*, 2 vols., Milan 1965, vol. 1, 229.

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(Ms BnF Gr. 236, fol. 2r).[62] On this version, a white dog with large floppy ears seems to be pointing towards a hidden covey of partridges (fig. 9). Another reason to think that the dog of the falconer could be a bird dog is the fact that the illustrator has chosen to portray three partridges hidden in a bush or small tree. He could have chosen to represent them flying away and the hound running after them, as we can see in similar images of hare hunting. But instead, the 11th century miniaturist has painted the precise moment before the partridges started the flight, which suggests that the hound remains still after detecting the scent of the covey exactly as a pointer would do.

These conclusions are nevertheless conjectural, since we still lack solid evidence to prove that bird dogs were known or used in the Byzantine world when our manuscript was commissioned. Moreover, many of the details that could make us think that the hound of the falconer is a bird dog –such as the hidden partridges or the ears and tail of the hound– may be explained by random decisions, instead of by a careful observation of actual hawking. Regardless the fact that the hound of the falconer in the Venetian *Cynegetica* is a gazehound or a bird dog, it is interesting to point out that the illustrator of this miniature included a hawking scene that has nothing to do with the text of the manuscript and lacks clear parallels in former extant Roman images of hunting.

6. Conclusions

Previous scholarship proposed that the images of the Venetian *Cynegetica* could be interpreted and studied as survivals of original Roman models that illustrate a 3rd century text written on an 11th century Byzantine manuscript. The hunting scenes of our manuscript were understood as scientific illustrations to clarify the concepts of the treatise. It is possible that some of the images were based on a Roman tradition, but the time lapse of eight centuries allowed the filtration of new images and customs that enriched the iconographical heritage of an 11th century manuscript. This is certainly the case of the representation of fowling on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica*. The scenes of children catching birds with limed reeds have parallels with late Roman iconography, but hawking was probably unknown in 3rd century Syria when Pseudo-Oppian wrote his treatise. As far as we know, hawking was imported in the Roman Empire at the time of the Germanic invasions when it was depicted on a 5th century mosaic from Carthage. The 6th century mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer attest that hawking remained popular in the early Byzantine Empire.

Therefore, the hawking scene on fol. 2v of the Venetian *Cynegetica* could not derive from an original Roman model. At best, it could have been conceived in the late

[62] Marcon, "Codex Gr. Z 479 (=881)", 241.

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5th or the early 6th century. However, the fact that the hawk is used to catch partridges with the help of a hound makes us think that this scene was created in a later period, even in the 11th century when our manuscript was commissioned. If we were to accept the possibility that the hound involved in the hunt on fol. 2v is a bird dog, this scene would precede some western late medieval hawking depictions. Nevertheless, we must admit that the scene is perfectly coherent with a typical gazehound used in 11th century Byzantine hunting, similar to those of the account written by Constantine Pantechnès. Since most Byzantine treatises on falconry have been lost, the hawking scene on fol. 2v is a very important iconographical vestige to understand how hawking was practiced between the 6th and the 11th centuries in the Byzantine world. Hawks were kept in captivity and released to catch partridges with the help of a hound that would flush the birds and retrieve them. A thorough analysis of this hawking scene reveals how inaccurate it may be to interpret the miniatures of the manuscript as simple illustrations of the text or as copies of lost Roman models. The Venetian *Cynegetica* is in many ways a genuine work of art that deserves a careful examination to be better understood in the historical context in which it was created.

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Fig. 1. Fowling scenes. Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881), fol. 2v, 11th century, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana

Fig. 2. Hawking of partridges. Detail of fig. 1. Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana

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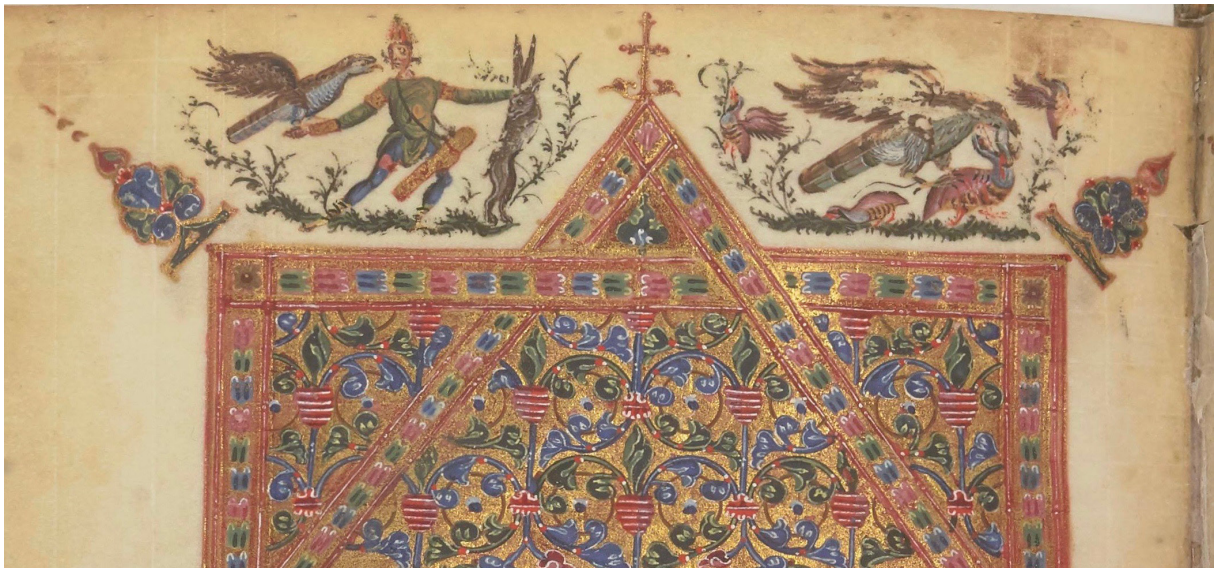

Fig. 3. Hawking scene above Canon Tables. *Tetraevangelion*, Ms BnF Gr. 64, fol. 5v, 11th century, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Fig. 4. Hawking of hares. Detail of a mosaic from Carthage, second half of the 5th century, Bardo Museum, Tunisia. Photo: T. Clark

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Fig. 5. Hare hunting scenes. Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881), fol. 54v, 11th century, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana

Fig. 6. Hunting mosaic. Villa of the Falconer, 6th century, Argos, Greece

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Fig. 7. Scenthounds. Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881), fol. 4r, 11th century, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana

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Fig. 8. Catch dogs. Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, Codex Marcianus Graecus Z 479 (=881), fol. 56v, 11th century, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana

Fig. 9. Fowling and hawking. Pseudo-Oppian, *Cynegetica*, Ms BnF Gr. 236, fol. 2r, 16th century, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

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